

CLAIMS:

SUB A6 1. A method of restricting software operation within a license limitation comprising; for a computer having a first non-volatile memory area, a second non-volatile memory area, and a volatile memory area; the steps of:
5 selecting a program residing in the volatile memory, setting up a verification structure in the non-volatile memories, verifying the program using the structure, and acting on the program according to the verification.

2. A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of: establishing a license authentication bureau.

10 SUB B2 3. A method according to claim 2, wherein setting up a verification structure further comprising the steps of: establishing, between the computer and the bureau, a two-way data-communications linkage; transferring, from the computer to the bureau, a request-for-license including an identification of the computer and the license-record's contents from the selected program;
15 forming an encrypted license-record at the bureau by encrypting parts of the request-for-license using part of the identification as the encryption key; and transferring, from the bureau to the computer, the encrypted license-record.

4. A method according to claim 2, wherein verifying the program further comprising the steps of: establishing, between the computer and the
20 bureau, a two-way data-communications linkage; transferring, from the computer to the bureau, a request-for-license-verification including an identification of the computer, the encrypted license-record for the selected program from the second non-volatile memory, and the licensed-software-program's license-record contents; enabling the comparing
25 at the bureau; and transferring, from the bureau to the computer, the result of the comparing.

5. A method according to claim 3 wherein the identification of the computer includes the pseudo-unique key.

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6. A method according to claim 1 wherein selecting a program includes the step of: establishing a licensed-software-program in the volatile memory of the computer wherein said licensed-software-program includes contents used to form a license-record.

5 7. A method according to claim 1 wherein setting up the verification structure includes the steps of: establishing or certifying the existence of a pseudo-unique key in the first non-volatile memory area; and establishing at least one license-record location in the first or the second nonvolatile memory area.

10 8. A method according to claim 6 wherein establishing a license-record includes the steps of: forming a license-record by encrypting of the contents used to form a license-record with other predetermined data contents, using the key; and establishing the encrypted license-record in one of the at least one established license-record locations.

15 *sub B3* 9. A method according to claim 1 wherein verifying the program includes the steps of: encrypting the licensed-software-program's license-record contents from the volatile memory area or decrypting the license-record in the first or the second non-volatile memory area, using the key; and comparing the encrypted licensed-software-program's license-record
20 contents with the encrypted license-record in the first or the second non-volatile memory area, or comparing the licensed-software-program's license-record contents with the decrypted license-record in the first or the second non-volatile memory area.

10. A method according to claim 1 wherein acting on the program
25 includes the step of: restricting the program's operation with predetermined limitations if the comparing yields non-unity or insufficiency.

11. A method according to claim 1 wherein the first non-volatile memory area is a ROM section of a BIOS.

12. A method according to claim 1 wherein the second non-volatile memory area is a E²PROM section of a BIOS.

11 13. A method according to claim 1 wherein the volatile memory is a RAM.

5 14. A non-volatile memory media used as a BIOS of a computer, for restricting software operation within a license limitation, wherein a pseudo-unique key is established.

15. A non-volatile memory media according to claim 14 wherein the pseudo-unique key is established in a ROM section of the BIOS.

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